

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 249.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

#### WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS SALE AND SLAUGHTER PROHIBITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 331 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 249.

□ 1028

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 249) to restore the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros, with Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 249 is important legislation with broad, bipartisan support. I am pleased to be joined in this endeavor by my colleague, the gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. ED WHITFIELD, and a number of other Members on both sides of the aisle.

This Congress is tasked with the stewardship of much that is invaluable, our breathtaking natural wonders, our healthy rivers and streams, icons of American history; and it is our responsibility as public stewards of our land to manage these resources for the good of future generations. It is a responsibility as chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee that I take very seriously.

The proper care and preservation of wild horses which roam public lands in the West fall within our stewardship, and we are failing to live up to our responsibility. I say that because in 1971 Congress formally protected these wild horses and mandated that they cannot be sold or processed into commercial products, in effect, slaughtered.

□ 1030

Since that time when the Bureau of Land Management has determined that the wild horse population is excessive to the ability of the range to support them, captured animals have been offered to the public through adoption.

But all that changed as a result of a rider tucked away into a massive omnibus appropriation bill enacted during December 2004.

The so-called Burns rider overturned 33 years of national policy on the care and management of wild horses and burros by repealing the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of these animals that had been in law. In effect, Mr. Chairman, these animals were earmarked for death.

Since that time, some of these animals, which belong to all Americans I might add, and which represent the very spirit of the American West, have been rounded up for slaughter and shipped overseas.

And to what end? So their meat can end up on menus in France, Belgium and Japan, where it is considered a delicacy.

Incredible. It is truly and simply incredible. We do not allow the commercial sale of horseflesh in this country for human consumption, but we are exporting horse meat for that very purpose abroad.

Since I first introduced this legislation during the last Congress, I have received an impressive volume of heartfelt letters and e-mails from across the Nation.

The very notion that wild horses, wild American horses, would be slaughtered as a food source for foreign gourmets has struck a chord with the American people. They see in this issue the pioneering spirit and the ideals of freedom. And the current policy has created disillusionment with many over how their government works and what their elected leaders stand for.

The measure we are now considering will halt that practice. The sale and slaughter of wild horses and burros must stop not only because it is wrong, but also because the program is a failure.

While the Bureau of Land Management, the Federal agency which oversees the program, may sincerely hope that these animals do not end up on menus in France or Japan or Belgium, the Burns rider severely handicaps efforts to protect these herds.

Now, some will say the sale authority is necessary because the agency costs of managing the program have grown too high, but this is an issue of the BLM's own making. Each year they round up more animals than can be adopted. The excess animals are sent to holding facilities where their numbers simply increase per year, year after year, driving up management costs. If the agency wants to save money without selling these animals, it needs only to get its round-ups and adoptions in sync.

There are also those who say we need to allow these animals to be sold off be-

cause there are too many of them on the public lands and they are causing massive resource damage.

First of all, it should be noted that there are significantly fewer wild horses and burros on public lands today than there were just 25 years ago.

Second, compared to the 3 to 4 million cattle that graze these same acres, wild horses and burros are hardly the most serious threat to our public rangelands.

All I seek to do in this legislation, with H.R. 249, is to return the law to the way it existed for 33 years prior to the Burns rider. The House has twice gone on record supporting a prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild horses and burros.

So I conclude by asking my colleagues' support once again today. It's time to do right by these living icons of the American West.

I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is indeed an honor for me to be here with the distinguished chairman of the Resources Committee. Through his illustrious career I have been impressed with the way he has run the committee. I've also been impressed with his commonsense approach to issues, except for this one. And I appreciate the opportunity of being here.

You know, Mr. Chairman, this is the time of year when everyone has a great deal of hope. This is the beginning of the baseball season, where every team, with the possible exception of the Royals, still has a mathematical chance of winning the division.

And as a loyal Cub fan, who is now in my 99th year, consecutive year, of reconstruction and renewal, there is still hope for me.

It is also sad because we are about to commemorate very soon the 43rd anniversary of the worst trade made in the history of baseball, according to many scholars. And that trade was a six-player trade in which my Cubs sent three players, including Lou Brock, to the St. Louis Cardinals in exchange for three other players and Ernie Broglio, who was an 18-game winner at the time.

Now, on paper this trade made great sense for the Cubs. They were getting an outfielder, a veteran relief pitcher, and a starting pitcher, a 20-game winner who had won 18 games the year before.

What happened in reality, of course, is that Lou Brock accepted the role of a lead-off hitter when he went to the Cardinals and spurred them to not only the Pennant but also the World Series victory on his way to a Hall of Fame career.

Broglio, a great pitcher, actually developed arm problems, won only seven games the rest of his career, and 2 years later he is out of baseball.

Now, this is known as one of those great trades that looked perfect on